

Testimony before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
March 11, 2014

Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I apologize for not being there in person, but my teaching schedule prohibits that. My name is Patricia O'Neill. I am a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Western Connecticut State University. I am Western's representative to the Faculty Advisory Committee. I am also Chapter president of WCSU-AAUP. I submit this testimony in support of SB 402, *An Act Concerning Faculty Representation on the Board of Regents for Higher Education*.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities is a relatively new system. In this new system, the Faculty Advisory Committee has played an important role in helping to chart a course for the future. It was instrumental in working to design a Transfer and Articulation Policy that will contribute to a path of seamless transfer between our colleges and universities. Members of the FAC participated in the strategic planning process that was undertaken some time ago. The Association of Governing Boards (ASB) would describe these efforts as "positive or good interactions between faculty and boards" (Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance, p.9).¹ One characteristic of a positive interaction between faculty and boards, according to the ASB, is that "faculty serve on the board or board committees and there are additional faculty who interact with the board" (Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance, p.10).²

Last year, legislation was passed that allowed for the Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee to serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board of Regents. SB 402 extends this by allowing the Vice-Chair of the FAC to also serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member. If this legislation is passed, it will ensure that there will always be representation from both the Colleges and Universities on the Board. Currently, there is representation from the Colleges, or the Universities, but not both.

Furthermore, it would also be important for faculty to serve on Board Committees. Decisions and policies that can have a major impact are often first considered in these Committees. Faculty should have a formal mechanism by which to participate and to offer the unique insights of those who work in the classroom. Such participation will

¹ Schwartz, M., Skinner, R., & Bowen, Z. (2009). *Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

² *ibid*, p. 10

maintain and grow the positive interactions between the Board and faculty that are so important to an effective and productive governing relationship.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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